



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Pest Detection and Management Programs – Program Update

Program: Huanglongbing (HLB – Citrus Greening) Date: January 9, 2006

Next steps - discussions were held Tuesday among APHIS headquarters, regional, and program representatives to map out an approach to dealing with HLB over the next few weeks. Officials from the Division of Plant Industry for the State of Florida also participated in the call. Among the topics discussed were: status of surveys in southwest Florida scheduled to take place from January 23 through February 17, 2006, revisions to State and Federal Orders, updating environmental documentation, establishing agreements and work plans for surveys in Western States and Puerto Rico, identifying laboratories and protocols for sample submission and reporting results, inputting survey data via the Internet and convening the HLB science panel, etc. Weekly or biweekly calls will be made to follow-up on actionable items.

HLB was first discovered in late August 2005 in south Florida by a Florida Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS)/SITC team conducting a Hot Zone survey at an Asian farm growing exotic tropical fruits. As a result of this detection a unified incident command was established in Miami and operated from September 13, 2005 to October 14, 2005. During that time period, 63 State and Federal employees conducted residential and commercial citrus grove surveys in seven southeast Florida counties. There were a total of 2,328 properties surveyed covering a total of 454 square mile sections. Additionally, out of 1,361 HLB samples taken, 179 positive trees were confirmed on 156 properties in 80 square mile sections in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Hendry, Martin, and St. Lucie Counties. During this time period, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry's Citrus Tree Survey Team performed inspections in commercial pummelo groves throughout the state. These inspections encompassed 47 groves totaling 21,345 acres.

The HLB-Incident Command System (ICS) was preparing to move operations up to West Palm Beach and begin surveying Florida's Treasure Coast when Hurricane Wilma impacted south Florida on October 24. Due to the significant damage brought on by this hurricane, HLB survey operations were moved to west-central Florida. From November 1 to December 16, 2005, Florida-CAPS personnel surveyed residential and commercial citrus groves located around commercial citrus nurseries in seven counties in west-central Florida. A total of 1,112 properties were surveyed which encompassed 22,074 trees in 156 square mile sections. These surveys accounted for two new detections of HLB, one in a residential setting in Highlands County and another in a commercial grove in DeSoto County.

To date there have been a total of 2,289 HLB samples taken accounting for 548 HLB positive trees on 448 properties in the following Florida counties: Miami-Dade, Monroe, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Hendry, Collier, Sarasota, Highlands, and DeSoto. The majority of these HLB positive sites are in residential areas; however, there have been HLB detections made in eight commercial groves in Palm Beach, Martin, Collier, Hendry, and DeSoto Counties.

Since the initial detection of HLB, both PPQ and the State of Florida have been working at harmonizing a regulatory response plan including addressing intrastate and interstate movement of HLB and Asian citrus psyllid host material, the development of a State Emergency Rule, a Federal Order, and an Environmental Assessment. Additionally, through the National Plant Board, there have been numerous periodic conference calls with other citrus producing states to keep them apprised of the HLB situation and on-going program activities in Florida.